

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO THE FIGHTING POWELLS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Col. Tom Murgatroyd of Sherman, IL, and his extraordinary family.

You may have heard the story of President Abraham Lincoln informing Lydia Bixby of the death of her five sons in defense of the Republic during the Civil War. This is not that story. You may have heard about the five Sullivan brothers who died on board the USS *Juneau* in World War II as they fought for freedom in the Pacific. This is not that story either.

No, Tom Murgatroyd's family does share that uncommon courage that runs in the blood of so many families with veterans, but this story doesn't end in the same way. Like so many great stories, this has the wonderful trait of being true. Tom had seven uncles serving in World War II, and all seven made it back home.

George and Addie Powell had 11 sons and 2 daughters. The family lived on a farm near Hillview, in Greene County, IL. In the summer of 1941, Addie wanted a picture of the whole family together. It is always difficult to gather a large family, but that picture was a rare feat and it would become a truly special one. That photo taken on Veterans Day would be the last time they were all together. Though seven of the sons would make it back home from the war, their brother John would succumb to lung cancer while those boys were overseas in 1945.

The sons who enlisted to join the war after Pearl Harbor were Arthur, Earl, Fred, George, Everett, Max, and Adrian Powell. You may be familiar with the service star pins that mothers of active duty servicemembers wore. Addie didn't have a service star pin large enough to include all of her fighting family on a lapel. Her solution was to put two pins with three stars each on the lapel. I assume she adjusted again when her seventh son joined the war. Three of the men were Army Air Corps and the other four enlisted in the Navy. The eldest, Arthur, already had a 20-year Navy career when the war started, and he returned to service as a recruiter. This sense of duty and patriotism extended to the entire Powell family, who all pitched in to help with the war effort. There would have been an eighth Powell enlisting had the war gone on another few years.

The whole family did their part for the war, but I want to focus on Everett for a moment. On March 4, 1944, he was flying his Thunderbolt P-47 on an es-

corting mission with a formation of Flying Fortresses. It was his 90th mission and also his mother's birthday. His plane was shot down over Belgium. He told his fighter group that he would bail out, but he never did. Two weeks later, the family was informed that Everett was missing. His mother Addie had a heart attack upon hearing the news.

Weeks turned to months, and Everett was still missing. Then, on the Fourth of July, the family received a message that Everett was alive and a prisoner of the Germans. The family's prayers were answered. Ruth, sister to the Powell brothers and Col. Tom Murgatroyd's mother, recalled that it was rightfully, "the happiest Fourth of July" in several years. Everett went on to endure 18 months in the German POW camp called Stalag 3. When Everett was released, he wandered until encountering the American lines and then boarded a ship to come home. He said he bought 24 chocolate bars in the ship's store and got so sick he never cared for chocolate afterward.

The family never ceased waiting to hear from their boys. While they were away, their sister Ruth made a banner for the family to represent the seven family members serving, because the military at the time didn't have any banners with more than six stars to represent the number of sons serving from one family.

The sons all wrote letters to their family. Their first questions consistently were about the crops back home before asking about family and friends. When they did return, their mom, Addie, was always waiting down the road to greet her sons.

The Powell family is an extraordinary example of what so many families experience during war. It should not surprise us that several of the Powells would continue their military service after the war. Everett, though being held in a POW camp, went on to have a nearly 30-year Air Force career. Many of the children of the Powell brothers and sisters went on to serve in the military, including Col. Tom Murgatroyd of Sherman, IL. George is the last surviving sibling who had served in World War II, and he is now living in Traverse City, MI.

I hope my colleagues will join me in celebrating the courage of the Powell family. Thank you, and all the families like you, who are doing their part to support our veterans and serving the country.

WORLD WAR II VETERANS VISIT

Mr. WALSH. Mr. President, over the past 2 years, the Big Sky Honor Flight has transported 755 World War II veterans to their memorial in Washington, DC. Before these trips, most of the veterans had never seen the memorial that was built in their honor.

Our World War II veterans sacrificed so much for our country, often deploying for as long as 4 years, and then re-

turned home to build the great country we have today. They truly are the greatest generation.

The Big Sky Honor Flight started out as a powerful idea to honor Montana's veterans, but getting 755 veterans, their caregivers, and medical staff across the country and back is no easy task. Today I want to recognize the selfless servants who made the Big Sky Honor Flight a reality.

The Big Sky Honor Flight Committee works tirelessly on behalf of our veterans. Their mission was to make sure every World War II veteran from Montana had the opportunity to visit our Nation's capital and see how grateful we are for their service. Today, as the ninth and final flight leaves Washington, DC, for Billings, MT, we are proud to say: mission accomplished.

The Big Sky Honor Flight Committee successfully raised \$1.45 million from Montanans to charter nine flights transporting the veterans to Washington, DC. The committee's dedication to bringing the veterans to see their monument was no easy task.

As honorary chair of the Big Sky Honor Flight, I saw firsthand the work that went into identifying our veterans, providing transportation, and coordinating all of the logistics.

As we celebrate the final Big Sky Honor Flight for our World War II veterans I want to pay tribute to the men and women who made the nine flights a reality: the Big Sky Honor Flight Committee.

From the bottom of my heart, I want to say thank you to the Big Sky Honor Flight Committee: Chris Reinhard, George Blackard, Burt Gigoux, Becky Hillier, Bill Kennedy, Denise Licata, Cory Miller, Charlie Reed, Ray Robinson, Tiffany Samel, Annette Satterly, Kathy Shannon, Vicky Stephens, and Tina Vauthier.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to ensure that Montana's World War II veterans saw their memorial.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING CONCERNS OF POLICE SURVIVORS

• Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the work of Concerns of Police Survivors, C.O.P.S., for 30 years of service to the surviving families of America's fallen law enforcement officers. In 1984, Suzie Sawyer started C.O.P.S. as a small grief support organization of 110 law enforcement survivors in the basement of her Prince George's County, MD, home. Following the retirement of her husband from the Prince George's County Police Department, C.O.P.S. relocated its national headquarters to Camdenton, MO, in 1993, where it has since grown, unfortunately every year, to serve over 30,000 surviving law enforcement families across the country at annual seminars and retreats. With 50 national chapters

and a yearly budget of \$3.4 million collected from private donations and awarded grants, C.O.P.S. assists with rebuilding the lives of surviving families and coworkers of law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty.

I thank Suzie Sawyer for her dedication to this great cause and thank C.O.P.S. for 30 years of incredible service to grieving surviving law enforcement families and coworkers.●

CHEROKEE COUNTY, IOWA

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the strength of my State of Iowa lies in its vibrant local communities, where citizens come together to foster economic development, make smart investments to expand opportunity, and take the initiative to improve the health and well-being of residents. Over the decades, I have witnessed the growth and revitalization of so many communities across my State, and it has been deeply gratifying to see how my work in Congress has supported these local efforts.

I have always believed in accountability for public officials, and this, my final year in the Senate, is an appropriate time to give an accounting of my work across four decades representing Iowa in Congress. I take pride in accomplishments that have been national in scope—for instance, passing the Americans with Disabilities Act and spearheading successful farm bills—but I take a very special pride in projects that have made a big difference in local communities across my State.

Today I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and residents of Cherokee County to build a legacy of a stronger local economy, better schools and educational opportunities, and a healthier, safer community. Between 2001 and 2013, the creative leadership in your community has worked with me to successfully acquire financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than \$5.2 million to the local economy.

Of course, my favorite memory of working together has to be ensuring that the Cherokee County Regional Airport has the resources it needs to stay modern. Dependable air service is a significant factor for growing businesses as well as increasing tourism in the area. I look forward to learning about the impact of these improvements, which are important for the airport and the local economy.

Among the highlights:

Investing in Iowa's economic development through targeted community projects: In Northwest Iowa, we have worked together to grow the economy by making targeted investments in important economic development projects, including improved roads and bridges, modernized sewer and water systems, and better housing options for residents of Cherokee County. In many cases, I have secured Federal funding

that has leveraged local investments and served as a catalyst for a whole ripple effect of positive, creative changes. For example, working with mayors, city council members, and local economic development officials in Cherokee County, I have fought for funding for small community airports, which brought more than \$1.4 million to the county in the past decade, helping to create jobs and expand economic opportunities.

School grants: Every child in Iowa deserves to be educated in a classroom that is safe, accessible, and modern. That is why, for the past decade and a half, I have secured funding for the innovative Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program—better known among educators in Iowa as Harkin grants for public schools construction and renovation. Across 15 years, Harkin grants worth more than \$132 million have helped school districts to fund a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools. In many cases, these Federal dollars have served as the needed incentive to leverage local public and private dollars, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect within a school district. Over the years, Cherokee County has received \$163,458 in Harkin grants.

Agricultural and rural development: Because I grew up in a small town in rural Iowa, I have always been a loyal friend and fierce advocate for family farmers and rural communities. I have been a member of the House or Senate Agriculture Committee for 40 years—including more than 10 years as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Across the decades, I have championed farm policies for Iowans that include effective farm income protection and commodity programs; strong, progressive conservation assistance for agricultural producers; renewable energy opportunities; and robust economic development in our rural communities. Since 1991, through various programs authorized through the farm bill, Cherokee County has received more than \$1.1 million from a variety of farm bill programs.

Keeping Iowa communities safe: I also firmly believe that our first responders need to be appropriately trained, equipped, and able to respond to both local emergencies and to statewide challenges such as, for instance, the methamphetamine epidemic. Since 2001, Cherokee County's fire departments have received over \$875,290 for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

Disability Rights: Growing up, I loved and admired my brother Frank, who was deaf. But I was deeply disturbed by the discrimination and obstacles he faced every day. That is why I have always been a passionate advocate for full equality for people with disabilities. As the primary author of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act,

I have had four guiding goals for our fellow citizens with disabilities: equal opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency. Nearly a quarter century since passage of the ADA, I see remarkable changes in communities everywhere I go in Iowa—not just in curb cuts or closed captioned television, but in the full participation of people with disabilities in our society and economy, folks who at long last have the opportunity to contribute their talents and to be fully included. These changes have increased economic opportunities for all citizens of Cherokee County, both those with and without disabilities, and they make us proud to be a part of a community and country that respects the worth and civil rights of all of our citizens.

This is at least a partial accounting of my work on behalf of Iowa, and specifically Cherokee County, during my time in Congress. In every case, this work has been about partnerships, cooperation, and empowering folks at the State and local level, including in Cherokee County, to fulfill their own dreams and initiatives. Of course, this work is never complete. Even after I retire from the Senate, I have no intention of retiring from the fight for a better, fairer, richer Iowa. I will always be profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve the people of Iowa as their Senator.●

OSCEOLA COUNTY, IOWA

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the strength of my State of Iowa lies in its vibrant local communities, where citizens come together to foster economic development, make smart investments to expand opportunity, and take the initiative to improve the health and well-being of residents. Over the decades, I have witnessed the growth and revitalization of so many communities across my State, and it has been deeply gratifying to see how my work in Congress has supported these local efforts.

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Today, I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and residents of Osceola County to build a legacy of a stronger local economy, better schools and educational opportunities, and a healthier, safer community.

Between 2001 and 2013, the creative leadership in your community has worked with me to successfully acquire financial assistance from programs I